

Preservation Activities at the Library of Congress

Appendix B: Report on the External Focus Session held November 1, 2000

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**Revised Draft
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Background

The focus session was held as a follow-up to a session that had been convened by the Library of Congress on July 9, 2000, in Chicago, during the American Library Association's annual conference. At that earlier session, the Library of Congress had undertaken to begin work on modeling its preservation activities, and an external working group was established to provide input to the modeling exercise.

At the end of September, the Library of Congress issued a contract for the development of a process model, an information model, and a high-level statement of functional requirements for systems supporting the preservation activities carried out within its Preservation Directorate. As part of the contract, the consultant was to conduct a focus session with the external working group that had been established at the July meeting in Chicago.

Participants

The external participants in the focus session were:

Connie Brooks, Stanford University
Erich Kesse, University of Florida
David Lowe, Columbia University
Carla Montori, University of Michigan
Bobbie Pilette, New York Public Library
Carol Unger, National Library of Medicine

Attending from the Library of Congress were:

Debra McKern, Prints and Photographs Division
Beth Dulabahn, ILS Program

Dexter Fox, APLO
Irene Schubert, Preservation Reformatting Division
Rebecca Guenther, Network Development and Marc Standards

Tom Delsey, the contractor for the LC modeling exercise, acted as facilitator for the session.

Objective

The objectives for the focus session were as follows:

1. to determine whether the processes reflected in the draft process model for the Library of Congress were consistent with the processes that comprise the preservation function in other libraries;
2. to determine whether the range of information reflected in the draft information model was consistent with information requirements in other libraries; and
3. to identify a subset of information requirements that libraries would want to share or have access to across institutions (i.e., via MARC records).

Documentation

Prior to the session, the participants were sent a second draft of a “strawman model” incorporating a process model overview and an information model consisting of fifteen entity-relationship diagrams corresponding to the processes and activities defined in the process model. An earlier draft of the “strawman model” (based on a preliminary analysis of source documents provided by the Library of Congress) had been developed as a means of focusing discussion in an initial working session with managers and staff from the Preservation Directorate. The second draft, which was used as the basis for the external focus session, incorporated additions and changes to both the process model overview and the information model that had been identified during that first working session with LC managers and staff.

Later in November, participants in the external focus session were sent revised drafts of the process and information models, incorporating changes identified at the focus session and an extended analysis of the tasks and information transactions carried out in association with each process that had been identified by the divisions within the Preservation Directorate.

A final draft of the process and information models, incorporating additions and changes identified in subsequent working sessions with LC managers and staff as well as feedback provided by external working group participants after the November 1 focus session, has been posted on the LC web site.

Refinement of the draft models

Overall, discussion at the external focus session indicated that the processes and activities identified and defined in the “strawman model” were consistent with the processes that comprise the preservation function in the libraries represented by the working group participants. It was noted, however, that the scale of the preservation activity is significantly smaller in those libraries than it is in the Library of Congress, and the organizational structure for preservation is less complex.

There were, however, a number of differences in detail identified and questions raised by the external working group, both during discussion at the external focus session and in subsequent correspondence. In most cases the changes suggested by the focus session participants were subsequently confirmed to be applicable to the Library of Congress as well, and as a result have been reflected in the final draft.

Among the refinements made in the draft models in response to input from the external working group were the following:

- the *marking* process was re-defined to include encryption, watermarking, and the application of other technological protection measures to digital materials;
- the *monitoring* process was re-defined to include monitoring of collection materials as part of the circulation process;
- the *replacement* process was re-defined to include verification of the results of the acquisitions process;
- the *treatment* process was re-defined to include cleaning;
- the *reformatting* process was re-defined to delete the reference to the production of a replacement or surrogate “in a different format”;
- the *archiving* process was re-defined (and subsequently re-named *storing*) to focus on the placing of an item in an environment that meets preservation requirements and restricting access to the item;
- the processing workflow, as depicted in the process model overview, was altered to indicate that items in the “collections” (i.e., items already stored as part of the library’s permanent holdings) may enter the preservation workflow and proceed directly to the *assessing* or *scheduling* process without first passing through a formal *monitoring* process;
- the processing workflow was also altered to indicate that subsequent to the *replacement* process the original and the replacement may be sent for *disposition* and *delivery*, respectively, or the original may be sent for *disposition* and the replacement may be cycled back for *assessing*;
- a *system* entity was added to the other entities (*material*, *equipment*, and *facility*) associated with the *procedure* entity;
- a relationship was drawn between the *survey* entity and the group of entities associated with *procedure*;
- the definition of the *plan* entity was extended to include grant proposals;
- the definition of the *location* entity was extended to include exhibition areas.

The only significant detail identified by the external working group that has not been incorporated into the final draft is the extension of the replacement process to include the actual ordering of a replacement as part of the preservation process activity *per se*. The model reflects the LC practice of handing over the ordering of a replacement to acquisitions staff and treating it as an acquisitions activity rather than a preservation activity.

Sharing preservation information

The process model developed for the Library of Congress identifies five processes that might be considered to be at the centre of the preservation activity: *housing, binding, treatment, reformatting, and replacement*. Those central processes, however, are bracketed, as it were, by another eleven in which preservation information is also recorded that is specific to an item or group of items: *assessing, scheduling, preparation, shipping, receiving, quality review, storing, disposition, delivery, routing, and tracking*.

Any library managing its own preservation activities obviously requires detailed item-specific information related to all sixteen of those processes. As part of the external focus session, however, participants were polled for their views on what subset of that information is of value to organizations external to the one that is actually managing the processing of the item. Based on initial responses from the focus session participants, it appears that the only one of the central processes in which there is unqualified interest from an external perspective is *reformatting*. There was also interest expressed in sharing information on the *treatment* process, specifically mass deacidification.

When the participants in the focus session were asked which of the processes that precede or follow the *reformatting* or *treatment* processes might be of interest, they indicated that there would be some interest in the *scheduling* of the *reformatting* or *treatment* process, and that they would want to be able to assume, at least, that *quality review* had been conducted prior to a library reporting that *reformatting* or *treatment* had been completed.

Participants in the focus session also noted that they would be interested in having access to information relating to the condition of an item (particularly lacunae) identified as part of a condition assessment. They also indicated that it would be useful to have access to information relating to copyright owners and reproduction rights gathered as part of the *preparation* process for *reformatting*. In addition, it was noted that information relating to access restrictions placed on a specific copy for preservation purposes would be useful.

It has been recommended to LC that a wider group of libraries engaged in preservation activities be canvassed to determine whether the views expressed by the focus group are representative of the community as a whole. Once a core set of processes of interest to external organizations has been identified, future development of

guidelines and standard terminology for use in the “Action Note” field in the MARC 21 formats should be focussed on those processes. Practices for recording condition information, reproduction rights information, and information pertaining to access restrictions also need to be reviewed.